से संभव है, क्योंकि स्टेट्स ने तो अभी तक मुझे जवाब भी नहीं दिए हैं कि कितने-कितने लोगों को, किस आधार पर उन्होंने लाइसेंस दिए और किस आधार पर लाइसेंस रिजैक्ट किए। लेकिन अगर यह जानकारी चाहिए तो पूछताछ करने के बाद एग्जैक्ट जानकारी मैं सदन के सामने रख दूंगा।

श्री सभापति: ठीक है।

**368 [The questioner (Shri Jhumuk Lal Bhendia) was absent for answer vide page 37.]*

Growth in cement sector

*369. SHRI ARJUN SINGH:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:††

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the cement sector has not been able to exceed 10 per-cent growth;

(b) if so, whether the reasons are the slack demand in western and southern markets and drought;

(c) whether in spite of this, the cement industry has managed 8-9 per cent growth during April-July, 2002; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken to improve the growth in cement sector?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The Planning Commission in its Approach Paper to the Tenth Plan has set an annual target of 10% growth for cement industry based on the recommendations of the Working Group. In the first 7 months of the current financial year (upto October 2002), the industry has already registered a growth of 9.25%.

††The question was actually asked on the floor of the house by Dr.T. Subbarami Reddy.

The production of cement during the last three years is shown in the table below. Cement production registered a negative growth of 0.64% during 2000-01, due to general slowdown in the market and drought like conditions that prevailed in some of the States, cement production started picking up in 2001-2002 and is now close to achieving a growth of 10%.

Year	Production (Mn. Tonnes)	Growth rate (%)
1999-2000	94.21	15.35
2000-01	93.61	(-) 0.64
2001-02	102.40	9.39
2002-03 (Upto Oct.)	63.17	9.25

(b) Region-wise consumption of cement during the last three years indicates the general slackness of demand during 2000-01 and improvement there after. Southern and Western Region have registered positive rates of growth in consumption in the current year.

(In Million Tonnes)

Region	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03 (Apr.-Sept.)
Northern Region	16.89 (+14%)	16.80 (-1%)	19.48 (+16%)	10.55 (+15%)
Eastern Region	11.96 (+22%)	13.66 (+14%)	16.30 (+19%)	8.26 (+7%)
Southern Region	25.99 (+15%)	24.17 (-7%)	26.42 (+9%)	15.29 (+14%)
Western Region	19.80 (+6%)	19.51 (-1%)	20.76 (+6%)	10.35 (+4%)
Central Regon	17.41 (+24%)	16.14 (-7%)	16.05 (-1%)	8.33 (+10%)

(c) During April-July, 2002 the production of cement registered an increase of about 11.50% it rose from 33.84 million tonnes in the corresponding period 2001-02 to 37-72 million tonnes in 2002-03.

(d) Based on the recommendations of the Working Group on cement industry constituted for the formulation of Tenth Five Year Plan the following areas have been identified as thrust areas to boost demand for cement. The Government has already initiated action for implementing their recommendations in respect of thrust areas:

(i) Promotion of concrete highways and rural roads;

(ii) Use of Ready-Mix-Concrete in large infrastructure projects;

(iii) Supportive infrastructure sector like railway and other means of transportation, power and coal to be strengthened.

(iv) Incentives for boosting export of cement like increasing duty-free import of coal against export of cement, freight concessions on export, etc.

In addition, through various fiscal incentives and reduction in interest rates, the housing development programme has picked up momentum and it has boosted the demand for cement.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Sir, my question is regarding the cement industry in Rajasthan. There is a Supreme Court order to stop the minings. Sir, I would like to know, through you, what is the actual Supreme Court order? As per the newspaper reports, it is only the illegal mining which has been stopped, but we hear that every type of mining has been stopped. I want an immediate reply on this. What is going to be the future of the cement industry in the Rajasthan State? What action is the Central Government going to take to protect the cement industry?

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: Sir, the actual question before the Supreme Court was about the illegal mining. The petition was also about the illegal mining. An empowered Committee had been asked to visit the site and they reported that illegal mining is still continuing. But, in the order, which the Supreme Court gave, they first said that if there is an illegal mining, those things must stop. But then they said that we prohibit and ban all mining activities in the entire Aravalli hills. This ban is not limited only to the hills circling, those Kot and Alampur villages, but extends to the entire hill range of Aravalli from Haryana to Rajasthan. This was a very big order. It affected the four cement plants in Rajasthan, which account for almost seven million tonnes capacity. Therefore, the Central Government, the Government of Rajasthan and the private parties also are all going to the Court. In fact, the hearing probably is taking place at this time today. The request of the Central Government, I am told by the Mines Department, also will be that the Order may please be revised to confine only to two mines.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Sir, the hon. Minister gave a reply in his statement that he has made now that the cement industry is growing, but the entire nation feels that the cement industry is in a bad shape and is in a crisis. They are not able to pay their dues to the concerned institutions. Therefore, I would like to know whether the demand the supply of cement is same and whether there is any coordination between the two. What is going to be the future of the cement industry in the present crisis of price and also less demand?

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: Sir, since April to July, even later on, cement production has increased by almost 11.2 per cent this year against the target of about 10 per cent set before the Tenth Plan per year. It is true that from time to time demand exceeds production and production exceeds demand. This is certainly the case in southern region where the prices, compared to April last year, have declined by almost 30 per cent. But a cure for that is more investment in the infrastructure sector, which the Government is trying to do, for instance, to the quadrilateral, like more facilities for encouraging demand for housing, which also the Government has spelt out in the Budget and now the borrowing rates; and the long-term problems about transport cost, power rates and reduction taxes on the industry are separate.

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Sir, I want to thank Dr. Reddy for being active. Otherwise, I would not have got a chance to put this question. Everyday, he puts two or three question ...(*Interruptions*)... That is why, I said, being active. ...(*Interruptions*)... We also submit our ...(*Interruptions*)... I also have something given by you ...(*Interruptions*)... Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Minister in his reply has stated that cement production registered a negative growth of 0.64 per cent during 2000-01 due to general slowdown in the market and drought-like conditions in certain areas of the country. I hope the hon. Minister is aware that two or three big giants have cornered cement industry. There is a serious cartel operating in the cement industry. The production has been reduced to boost up the price and that is why prices have gone up by almost 30 per cent to 40 per cent during the last one and a half years. Sir, my question is whether the Government is aware that there is a cartel in cement industry. If it is so, what steps are the Government taking to ensure that artificial shortage is not created by reducing production or not by achieving targeted production and that supply is easily available? Thank you, Sir.

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: Actually, I have the list of the mergers and acquisitions that have taken place. If you want, I can read them out. But on the question of the formation of the cartel, while all of us have read about it in the newspapers, the fact of the matter is that, as I have reported, the production has increased. Dr. Reddy was just pointing out that production was in excess of demand and prices, far from increasing, have, in fact, in the southern States, certainly below Maharashtra, have fallen by 30 per cent rather than. ...(*Interruptions*)...

DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: This is unfair, this is wrong. In Hyderabad, the cement prices are Rs. 140 ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let him speak ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: In some places, prices are Rs. 160 ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: Sir, I am here not to protect anybody, but I can give you the prices as they are obtained from April 2001 till today. It is true that from month-to-month things will change. The fact is that even in Hyderabad in April 2001, the price was Rs. 143. It has come down to Rs. 115 in April 2002 and then changed to Rs. 111, Rs. 105, Rs. 104, Rs. 105, and Rs. 120 and it may have gone up back to the position of April 2001. Certainly, if there is problem of cartel, it will be attended to under the Competition Bill, which is before the Parliament. That is the proper remedy for all cartelisation...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No further question. I would not allow.... (*Interruptions*)... Dr. L.M Singhvi ...(*Interruptions*)...

DR. L.M. SINGHVI: As a result of an *ex parte* injunction passed by the Supreme Court in a case in which Rajasthan was not even a party, the livelihood of about a million people is likely to be affected. Is the Central Government taking any steps to bring the full facts to the attention of the Court?

SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: Sir, as I mentioned earlier, the hearing is actually taking place today and the Central Government, through the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General, is apprising the Court of the entire facts in regard to this, with the request that the order be revised and by confined only to the illegal mining.

WELCOME TO PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION FROM TURKEY

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon'ble Members, I have an anouncement to make.

We have with us, seated in the Special Box, Members of a Parliamentary Delegation from Turkey, currently on a visit to our country, under the distinguished leadership of His Excellency, Mr. Bulent Arinc, Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

On behalf of the Members of the House, and on my own behalf, I take pleasure in extending a hearty welcome to the Leader and other members of the Delegation, and wish our distinguished guests an enjoyable and fruitful stay in our country. We hope that during their stay here, they would be able to see and learn more about our Parliamentary System, our country and our people and that their visit to this country will further strengthen the friendly bonds that exist between India and Turkey. Through them, we convey our greetings and best wishes to the Parliament and the friendly people of Turkey.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS—CONTD.

डा॰ अबरार अहमद: सभापति महोदय मैं सीमेंट के मामले में सरकार से यह जानना चाह रहा हूं कि क्या सरकार इस संबंध में कानून बनाएगी, जो सुप्रीम-कोर्ट ने आदेश दिया ...(**व्यवधान**)... सर, राजस्थान बिल्कुल बर्बाद हो गया है, सीमेंट उद्योग बंद हो गया है, करोड़ों लोग इससे एफेक्टेड हैं। तो क्या सरकार कोई कानून बनाएगी, जैसे चुनाव सुधार के बारे में जब सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने आदेश दिया तो फौरन हमने कानून बनाया ...(**व्यवधान**)... आज राजस्थान में एक करोड़ से ज्यादा लोग प्रभावित हैं। सर, क्या इस संबंध में सरकार कोई कानून बनाएगी, कोई बिल माननीय सदन में लाएगी यह मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाह रहा हूं।

श्री सभापति: अभी तो यह सारा मामला सुप्रीम कोर्ट के विचाराधीन है। इसका निर्णय होने के बाद सरकार को क्या करना है और हमको क्या करना है, इसको हम देखेंगे।

डा॰ अबरार अहमद: सर, राजस्थान में एक करोड़ से ज्यादा लोग प्रभावित हैं। वहां सीमेंट उद्योग बंद है, मार्बल इंडस्ट्री सारी बर्बाद हो रही है। सरकार फौरन इस पर कानून लाए। ..(**व्यवधान**)... सर, इस तरह तो राजस्थान के लोग मर जाएंगे। ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सभापति: आज तो बहस हो रही है, मंत्री जी आज क्या कहेंगे। सुप्रीम कोर्ट का निर्णय हो जाए, उस निर्णय में किस प्रकार की स्थिति रहती है, उस पर आप चर्चा करने के लिए अधिकृत हैं, मुझे कोई आपत्ति नहीं है।

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: No, Sir. We want the Minister to answer this question tomorrow. (*Interruptions*)

National Waterways Project

*370. SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to launch National Waterways Project throughout the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that the National Waterwsays Development Council, Madurai has submitted a proposal pertaining to the National Waterways Project;

(d) if so, the salient features of the proposal; and

(e) the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL): (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) National Waterways Development Council (NWDC), Madurai submitted a proposal titled 'National Waterways Project'. This project envisages construction of three artificial big canals namely, Himalayan Canal (4500 Kms. long), Central Canal (5750 Kms. long) and Sourthern Canal (4650 Kms. long). Width of these canals is proposed as 120 metres and minimum depth of water as 10 metres. Cost of the project was indicated as Rs. 4,00,000 crores. This project is of the nature of multipurpose water resource project covering irrigation, flood control, generation of power and navigation. The main advantage of the project so far as Ministry of Shipping is concerned is that inland vessels can ply on these canals.

(e) This is a multipurpose water resources project covering irrigation, flood control generation of power, navigation etc. A national perspective plan for inter-linking of rivers by which water can be transferred from water